

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LA PAZ 03187 162203Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 3187

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, BL

SUBJ: PDC-PRA AND MNRI FORM NEW OPPOSITION ALLIANCE

1. PDC-PRA AND MNRI ANNOUNCED FORMATION OF NEW OPPOSITION POLITICAL ALLIANCE MAY 15 WHICH BRINGS TOGETHER SMALL CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC AND AUTHENTIC REVOLUTIONARY PARTIES WITH GROUP HEADED BY EXILED MNR LEADER SILES ZUAZO. NEW ALLIANCE WAS ANNOUNCED AT PRESS CONFERENCE CALLED BY MNRI SECRETARY OF ORGANIZATION RAMON CLAURE, PDC CHIEF BENJAMIN MIGUEL AND PRA LEADER WALTER GUERVARA ARCE, WHO ACTED AS SPOKESMAN FOR THE TRIO. STATED PURPOSE OF NEW POLITICAL GROUPING IS TO UNITE THREE CURRENTS OF "DEMOCRATIC AND POPULAR NATIONALISM OF THE LEFT" IN A COMMON FRONT WITH OTHER PARTIES AND ORGANIZATIONS OF SIMILAR TENDENCY. PDC-PARA-MNRI ALLIANCE PLANS TO CAMPAIGN FOR FREEING OF POLITICAL PRISONERS, RETURN OF POLITICAL EXILES AND CONSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE COUNTRY VIA NATIONAL, MUNICIPAL AND UNIVERSITY-LEVEL ELECTIONS.

2. ADMINISTRATIVELY, ALLIANCE WILL BE DIRECTED BY COMMITTEE COMPOSED OF CHIEF, SUB-CHIEFS AND EXECUTIVE SECRETARIES OF THREE PARTIES. PRESIDENCY OF THIS NATIONAL COMMITTEE WILL BE EXERCIZED ON ROTATING BASIS FOR THREE MONTHS EACH DURING FIRST YEAR OF ALLIANCE, FOLLOWING ALPHABETICAL ORDER OF INITIALS OF THE PARTIES (E.E., MNRI, PDC, PRA). IN THEORY, THIS ALLIANCE WILL BE OF INDEFINITE DURATION, BUT IN PRACTICAL TERMS GUEVARA ADMITTED THAT ALLIANCE

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PAGE 02 LA PAZ 03187 162203Z

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WILL LAST AT LEAST THROUGH 1975, AS PDC-PRA AND MNRI VIEW THIS PERIOD AS CRUCIAL TIME FOR DESIRED RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT.

3. COMMENT: MOST INTERESTING ASPECT OF THIS NEW OPPOSITION GROUPING, WHICH JOINS ESTABLISHED PDC-PRA ALLIANCE WITH SEMI-CLANDESTINE MNRI, IS PUBLIC REEMERGENCE OF PARTY OF SILES ZUAZO. DECISION OF THIS MAJOR LEFTIST POLITICAL FORCE TO UNITE WITH ITS SMALL, WEAK PDC-PRA ALLIES IS A SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL BREAK-THROUGH FOR ANTI-REGIME OPPOSITION AND WILL INEVITABLY DRAW REACTION FROM BANZER GOVERNMENT. CLAURE, WHO HAS BEEN TESTING GROUND WITH SEVERAL PUBLIC STATEMENTS IN RECENT MONTHS, WAS CAREFUL TO ASSURE PRESS THAT DOCUMENT SIGNED BY SILES IN BUENOS AIRES RECENTLY (TOGETHER WITH JUAN LECHIN AND EX-PRESIDENT TORRES) HAS NO RELATIONSHIP TO NEW PDC-PRA-MNRI PACT. HE FURTHER ADMITTED THAT NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF MNRI WITHIN BOLIVIA NOT YET FORMED.

4. GOVERNMENT REACTION TO THIS DEVELOPMENT WILL PROVIDE IMPORTANT INDICATOR OF BANZER'S WILLINGNESS TO ALLOW MODERATE LEFTIST PARTIES TO OPERATE OPENLY WITHIN NEW DOMESTIC POLITICAL ORDER. INITIAL GOB REACTION IS LIKELY TO BE CAUTIOUS, UNLESS MINISTRY OF INTERIOR DECIDES TO LAUNCH CRACKDOWN ON MNRI USING SILES-LECHIN-TORRES STATEMENT AS PRETEXT. SUCH A HASTY MOVE WOULD, HOWEVER, VIRTUALLY ELIMINATE ANY PROSPECT THAT MODERATE OPPOSITIONISTS CAN BE WOODED BY GOVERNMENT INTO PARTICIPATION IN FORTHCOMING NATIONAL CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL.
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